Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.
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EDITORIAL

Once again the Spanish Main Provincial meeting will be held at the Conservative Club, Urmston, Manchester, on April 6, 1991, from 10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.. As in previous years advance warning of attendence is necessary to comply with licensing laws and to order your buffet lunch. So, if you are thinking of attending, please write to the editor as soon as possible. Details of location will be sent nearer the time.

Although not finalised, Central America will be represented by Costa Rica, and material from several South American countries will be shown.

Regarding Private Treaty List No.1, the good news is that all lots have been sold, but the bad news is that no-one has offered any more material and so as yet there is no list No.2. Hopefully there will be.

I would like to thank those members who responded promptly to our renewal of subscriptions request and continue to support our endeavours. Renewal reminders sent separately are expensive and time consuming to keep track of, making life difficult trying to run a Newsletter such as this on a voluntary basis with tight budgetry control. Your continuing co-operation is appreciated.

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It is with great sadness that we report the death of our member HENRY MADDEN, of Baltimore, USA on November 26, 1990. His close friend Kilian Nathan says of him "Central American Philately lost one of its great experts. Henry had a tremendous and deep knowledge, especially of the pre-stamp period and postal history in general of the Central American countries. It was always a pleasure to discuss interesting matters with him." Rest in peace.

THREE SCARCE TYPES OF COSTA RICAN REGISTRATION LABELS

by RICHARD SAUNDRY

When Costa Rica joined the U.P.U. in 1883, registered letters destined for foreign destinations were signified by either special handstamps or registration labels which included a large easily recognisable letter 'R' for 'Recommande', and a space for the insertion of the registration number. The earliest registration label appeared immediately, for we read in the October 1883 issue of the Philatelic Record:-

> "We have seen a registration label which we do not suppose has any philatelic significance, as it merely denotes that the letter to which it is affixed |is registered| and is not a stamp defraying the cost of such registration. It is printed in blue on salmon-coloured paper. Above are the letters UPU, in the centre is a large fancy R, and below Costa Rica on a ground of arabesques, the whole bordered by two plane lines. Beneath the border is a dated line headed by No....., Perf 11½."

These registration labels had a fairly long life and examples are found on letters well into the 1890's, resulting in many examples surviving on cover; desirable as they may be because they were the first, they are neverthleless not too scarce. Any devotee of Costa Rican postal history and the registration system should not find it too difficult to acquire examples since they do appear quite regularly at auction. I show an example from my collection, a registered letter from San Carlos to Switzerland, sent in March 1899 (fig. 1).

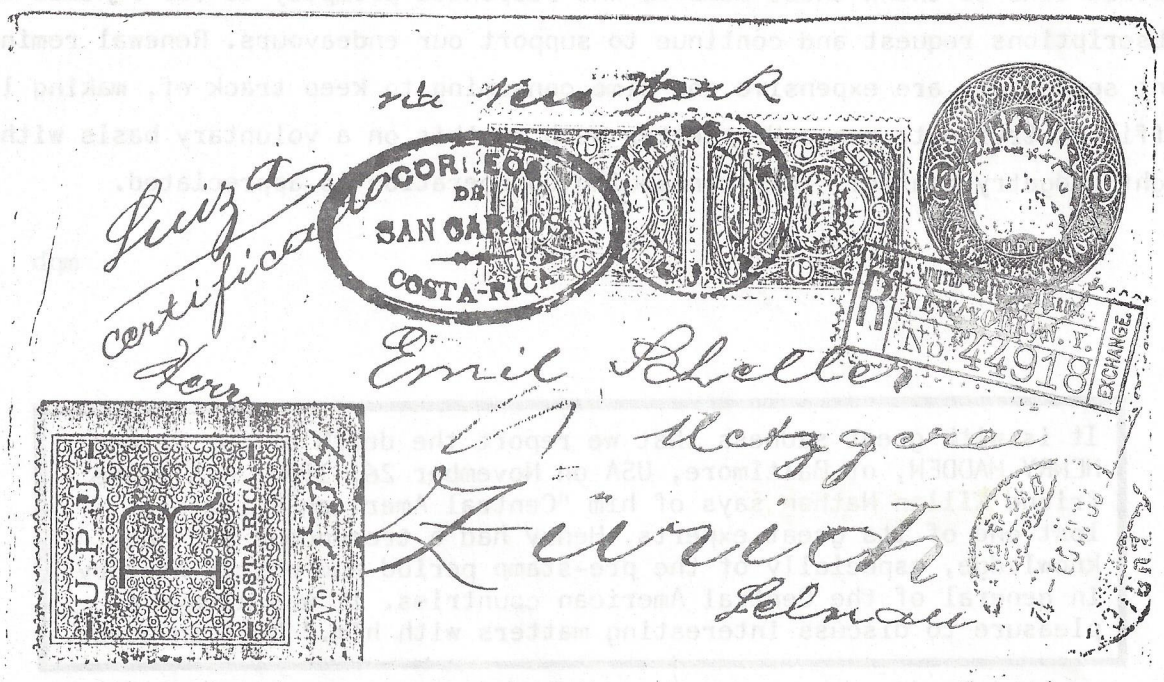

Figure 1: An example of the first Costa Rican registration label. March 1899.

As a general rule successive registration labels from that time become less scarce since they were used in the twentieth century, and desirable as they may be, particularly on cover, they are not too difficult to find.

If I may be allowed to depart momentarily from the main thrust of this discourse I would like to make one strong comment - unlike the writer in the Philatelic Record in 1883 I think that registration labels do have philatelic significance, and upon careful searching of approximately fifty examples in my collection I find that I have examples of three types of Costa Rican labels that I intuitively feel must be decidedly scarce.

Type I - The First Decade of the Twentieth Century

A few years back my good friend Leo Harris kindly gace me two album pages on which were examples of registration labels of a type that I had never seen before. Each label was of white ungummed paper, Perf 11½. The printed design in red ink was contained in a box 45 x 18mm, consisting of a large letter 'R' on the left and then within three divided horizontal spaces "Republica de Costa Rica", space for printing the name of the town in black, and "No...." with a space for the insertion of the registration number. The examples fall into two sub groups:-

a) Cartago, Esparta, Heredia, Juan Viñas, Liberia, Limon, Matina, Puntarenas, San Jose, San Carlos, Turrialba, Siquirres and Zent. (Figure 2).

b) Alajuela, Desamparados, Santo Domingo, San Ramon and Grecia. (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Sub-group (a)

Figure 3. Sub-group (b)

With sub-group (a) the letters of the black printed town names were bold 2.5mm high, whereas with sub-group (b) the black letters were only 2.0mm high. All examples were apparently unused since they did not have registration numbers added, with the exception of my example for Grecia. For a long time I held the opinion that these labels were some sort of essays. I can now report that I have located an example of sub-group (a) used on cover with a further example of this general type but which should probably be considered as being of sub-group (c).

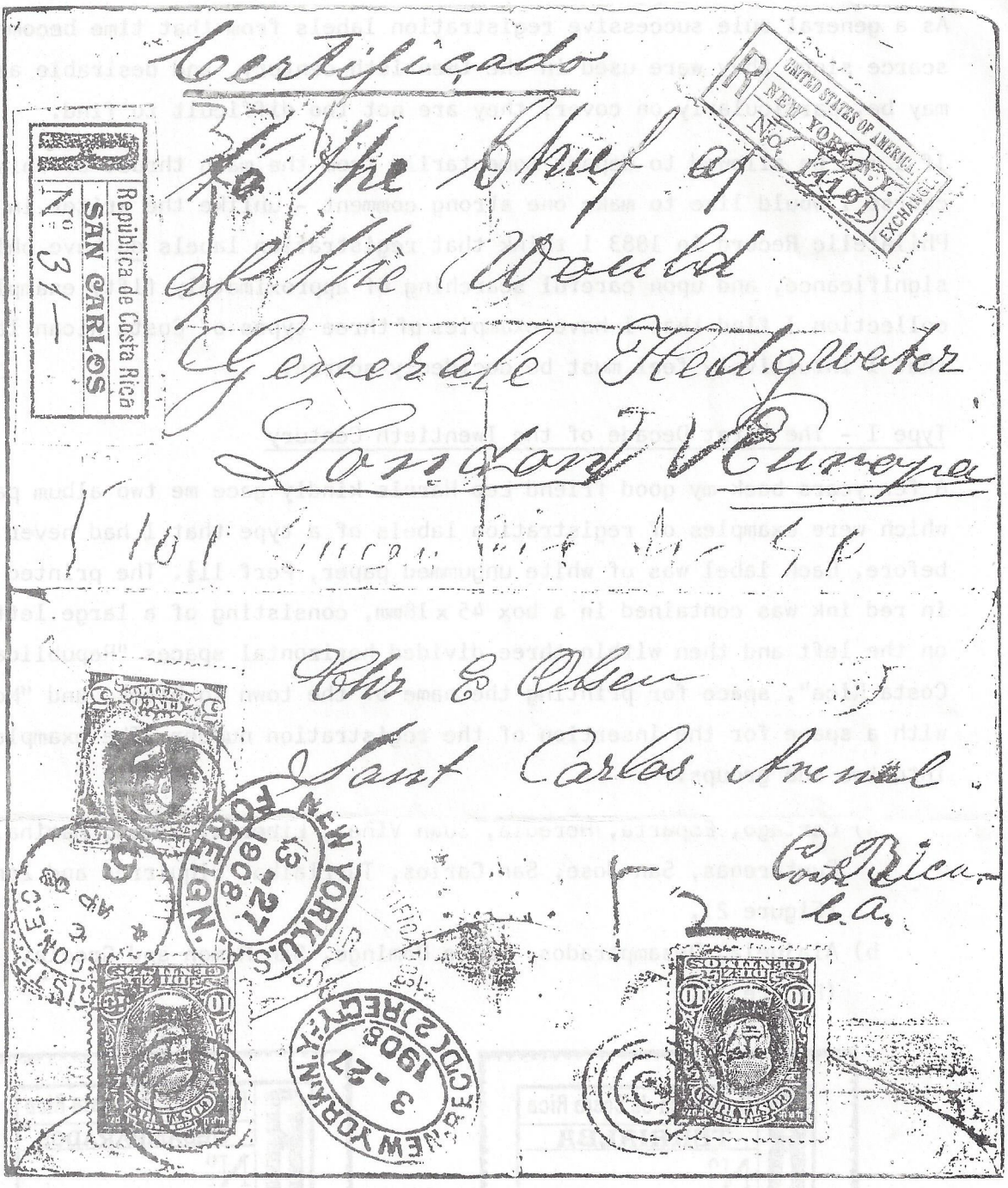

Figure 4. Sub-group (a). 17 March 1908.

My first example (Figure 4 above) is on a registered cover from San Carlos Arenal to London dated 17 March 1908, which curiously is addressed to "The Chief of the World, General Headquarters, London" - I am not sure to whom this letter was addressed but it is flattering to think that this "Big Cheese" was an Englishman - I suspect that this letter may have been addressed to the World Chief Scout(?). The San Carlos registration label matches exactly the mint example with one important difference in that on the cover it is imperforate.

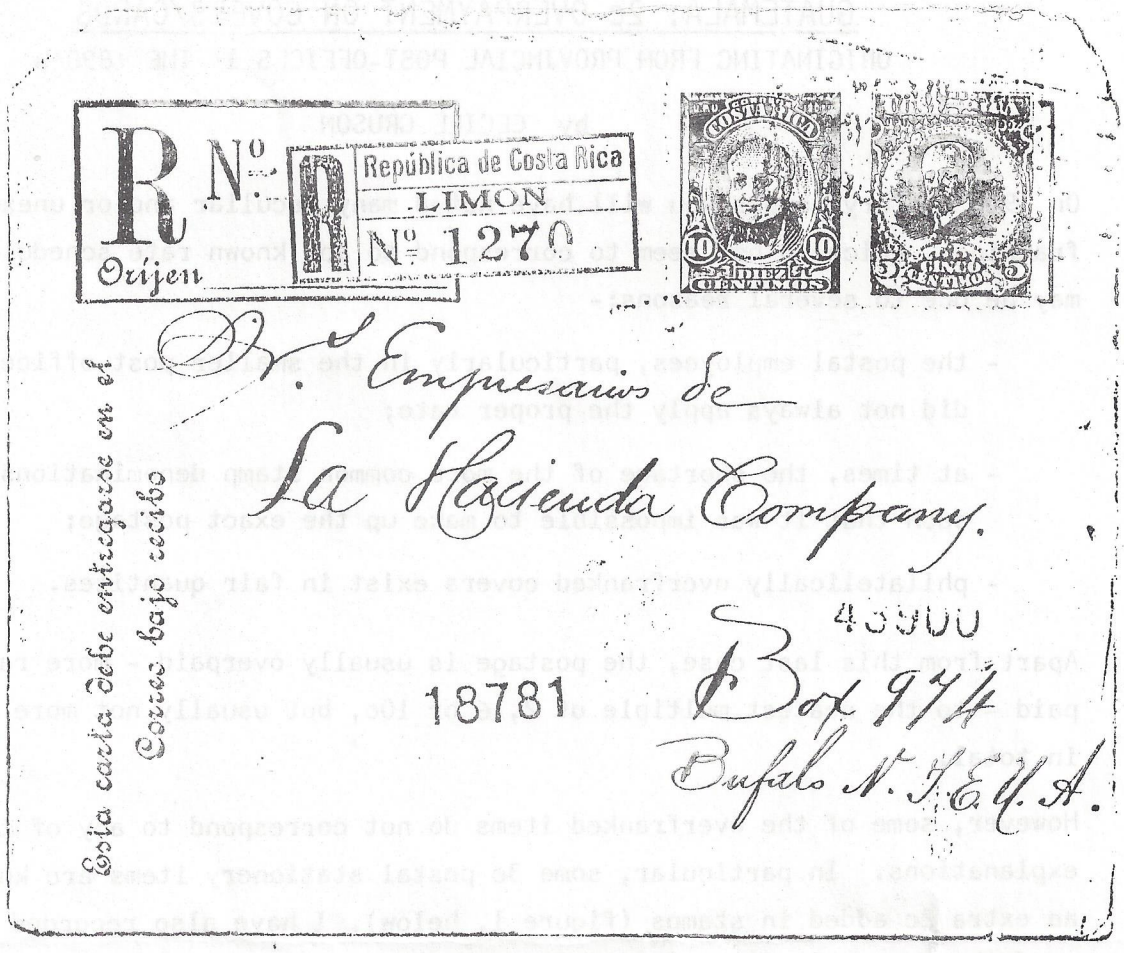

Figure 5. Sub-group (c). 10 May 1909.

My second example (Figure 5 above), was used on a registered letter from Limon to the United States sent 10 May 1909. Here the printing of the black 'Limon' is of a different form from that in my mint selection (sub-group (c)), and once again as with the other example it is found on cover imperforate. I believe that this type of label to be very scarce and its period of use was probably restricted to the 1908/9 period. It would be particularly interesting to hear if any of our readers have seen other examples, in particular sub-group (b), or perforated examples used on cover. I have been on the lookout for any example of these scarce labels on cover for several years now and I have been fortunate to secure the only two that I have seen on the philatelic market - I vaguely remember seeing a third example in a Costa Rican auction catalogue of approximately ten years ago.

to be continued

GUATEMALA: 2c OVERPAYMENT ON COVERS/CARDS

ORIGINATING FROM PROVINCIAL POST-OFFICES IN THE 1890's

by CECILE GRUSON

On 19th century covers you will have noted many peculiar and/or unexplainable frankings, which do not seem to correspond to any known rate schedule. This may be due to several reasons:-

- the postal employees, particularly in the smaller post offices, did not always apply the proper rate;
- at times, the shortage of the more common stamp denominations was such that it was impossible to make up the exact postage;
- philatelically overfranked covers exist in fair quantites.

Apart from this last case, the postage is usually overpaid - more rarely underpaid - to the neatest multiple of 2, 6 or 10c, but usually not more than 1 - 2c in total.

However, some of the overfranked items do not correspond to any of the above explanations. In particular, some 3c postal stationery items are known with an extra 2c added in stamps (figure 1, below). I have also recorded two registered covers with a 2c OVERFRANKING made up of at least one 1c stamp (figure 2, opposite). All of these covers so far originate from provincial post offices.

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

In the case of the Panzos cover, the hour on the datestamp is "7T" (7 p.m.) which set me wondering whether provincial post-offices applied some form of LATE FEE. In the postal publications known so far, late fees were applicable in Guatemala City only for unregistered letters deposited after 6 p.m. in the mail box of the General Direction of Mails on overseas departure days via San José. The rates were:-

- in 1883: an additional 5c per item;
- in 1893 and 1897: double postage.

It would appear logical for provincial post offices to collect late fee also, but so far no such ruling has been found. If true, the late fee of 2c must have applied to all categories of mail, i.e. including registered letters. The items so far recorded are:-

Quezaltenango	Nov 19, 1893:	2c added to 3c p.s. card
Tumbador	Jul 5, 1894:	2 x 1c added to half of an international reply postal stationery card
Panzos	Sep 3, 1899:	registered 'AR' letter
Livingston	Jan 16, 1900:	registered letter.

Descriptions or preferably photostats of any cover you might have corresponding to the above specifications, including hour if any would be gratefully received, via the editor.

(Coincidentally the article on the opposite page deals with the same matter for the Republic of Nicaragua - Ed.)

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ABNCo DIE PROOFS OFFERED

Our readers may be interested to know that Daniel Loizeaux, son of the ABNCo engraver Elie T Loizeaux, is offering die proofs from his father's collection at one hundred dollars each. The work of Eli T Loizeaux was detailed in the Essay Proof Society's journal, Vol.44, No.3 of 1987.

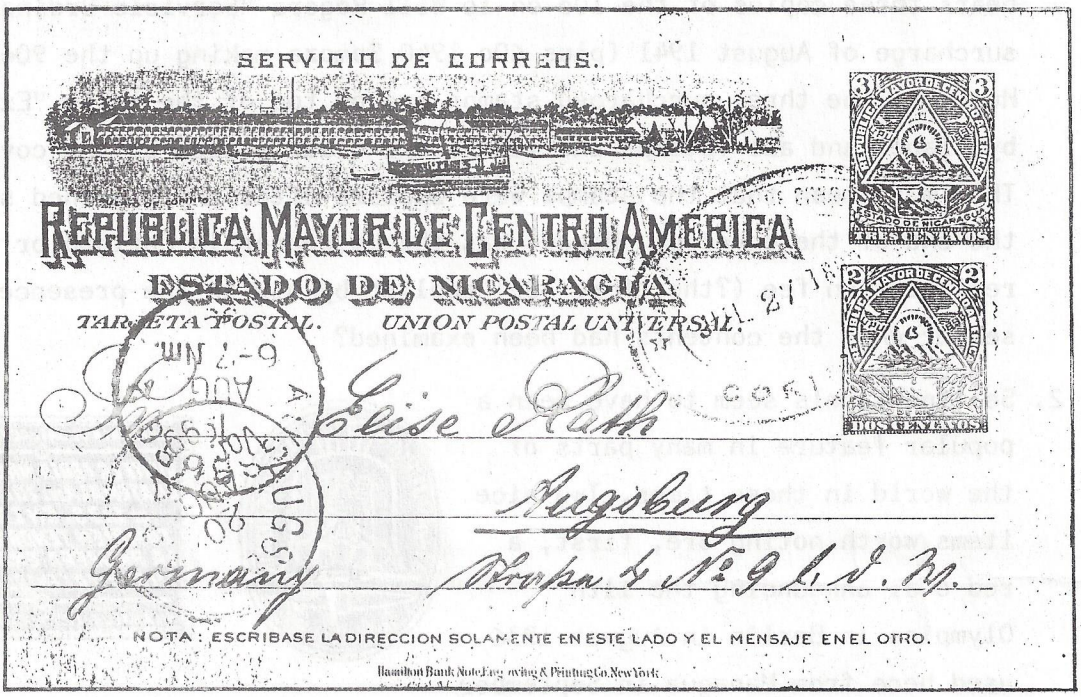
The die proofs offered are (Scott type and number):-

Bolivia: A47; Brazil: A56, A68; Chile: A54, A55;
Colombia: A99, A179, A219; Costa Rica: A71, 74, 75, AP8, A109 (229, C88B, C126);
Ecuador: A62, 80, 86 (s223, 237), A140, AP10, A159, A163, AP26, A172, A175;
Guatemala: A52; Haiti: A20, A63; Nicaragua: AP14; Panama: AP34, 40, 51;
Paraguay: SP4; Peru: A52, A66 (s227, 228), A80, A83, AP24;
Salvador: A137 (580).

Anyone interested in these die proofs should write direct to Daniel Loizeaux, at 45 Zaccheus Mead Lane, Greenwich, CT 06831, USA. Phone (203) 869-0452.

NICARAGUA: AN ADDED 2c STAMP ON A 3c POSTAL CARD by MICHAEL SCHREIBER

The illustrated 1898 Nicaraguan postal card bears five centavos postage, a 2c overpayment of the 3c overseas postal card rate. The added 1898 2c stamp can be explained by a 2c fee for late mail, yet the card has no late fee handstamp or notation.


SERVICIO DE CORREOS.
REPUBLICA MAYOR DE CENTRO AMERICA
ESTADO DE NICARAGUA
TARJETA POSTAL.
UNION POSTAL UNIVERSAL
Leise Rath
Augsburg
Germany
NOTA: ESCRIBASE LA DIRECCION SOLAMENTE EN ESTE LADO Y EL MENSAJE EN EL OTRO.
Hamilton Bank Note Engraving & Printing Co. New York.

The card is cancelled Corinto July 27, 1899, and has two receiving marks of Augsberg, Germany, an August 19 evening cancel and an August 20 morning cancel.

The German message is dated July 24 and is from a man (Hans Rath) to his wife or sister. He writes, in the first person plural, of a "we" lying in the vicinity of Corinto for three weeks and not travelling to San Jose. He complains of the heat but adds that things will be better at San Francisco.

I believe the card is from a sailor on the German cruiser Gaier. The dates seem right and the cruiser did go on to San Francisco in August 1899. See Kilian Nathan's article about the Gaier in Issue No.36, July 1989. Can anyone provide information that will support or refute this hypothesis?

Can anyone provide information to support or refute that the added 2c stamp represents a late fee? Who can show another 3c postal card with an added 2c stamp?

NICARAGUA: WARTIME CENSORSHIP AND OTHER MISCELLANIES

by DEREK POCOCK

A recent purchase of some 1930 to 1940 Nicaraguan covers revealed one or two items which presnt some features worth a paragraph in our Nresletter.

1. A 1942 "Examined by Censor Seal", registered Corinto to Philadelphia. It bears three copies of the 10c on 1c Will Rogers "Servicio Ordinario" surcharge of August 1941 (plus 60c 1940 Somoza making up the 90c rate). However, the three surcharged stamps are on top of the white "Examined by" label and all (stamps and label) are clearly tied to the cover back. This must mean that the stamps were applied after the examined seal closed the end of the envelope. Hence, was the US censor in Corinto or was the registration fee (?therefore 30c) applied by him in the presence of the sender when the contents had been examined?

2. Sealing labels seem to have been a popular feature in many parts of the world in those times. Two nice items worth noting are, first, a red oval announcing the 11th Olympics in Berlin in August 1936 used here from Managua in September 1936. The second is a green rectangular sticker announcing the 1st Central American Philatelic Exhibition in November 1938 used from Corinto in October of that year.

GUATEMALA·EL SALVADOR·HONDURAS
VISITE LA FERIA NACIONAL DE GUATEMALA DEL 20 AL 27 DE NOV. DE 1938, EN LA QUE TAMBIEN TENDRA LUGAR LA PRIMERA EXPOSICION FILATELICA CENTROAMERICANA
NICARAGUA·COSTA RICA·PANAMA

3. Who applied the cachet declaring no cash enclosed in the (registered) letter? Was this a post office requirement and applied therefore on lodging the item?

4. Should we start to list the shipping/paquebot cancels found on Nicaragua (or other Central American countries)? Two nice examples in the lot showed a framed M.S.CARIBIA in November 1935 and another the unframed MS Portland in July of that year. To these I add the Alexandria in 1937 and the D."Alda" in 1927, but there must be many more.

5. Finally in reviewing a batch of this sort of material, it is interesting to note the rates at the time particularly to a particular destination in this instance Germany and also the errors that occurred when a few cents were over or under paid. Given that throughout the period the airmail rate was 22½ cents, nevertheless there are frankings of 19c (1937), 23c (several in 1933 and 1934), 21½c, 23½c and 24½c. If the next weight step was 37½c, nevertheless rates of 38c, 40½c and 42c are also found. This illustrates the potential error of inferring a rate from a single example. Either the official schedule must be found or the common rate found from a reasonably large batch of mail.

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NICARAGUAN REVENUES: Whilst I am familiar with Forbin's listing of telegraph stamps, I am unaware of a listing of revenues, such as the Consular Fiscal stamps, which were later surcharged for postal use. In response to a request for help from one of our members, does anyone know of such a listing, or do they have a listing of their own they would care to share?

C.A. POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC CONVENTION: Further to Cecile Gruson's comments on this convention, she warns that there is no evidence so far that the Convention was ever put into force, and the rates it quotes are considerably higher than the Guatemalan domestic rates at that time. Consequently care should be exercised when trying to explain rates of other Central American Republics by this means.

MULTIPLE REGISTRY: Cecile Gruson informs us that she has several triple registry covers, all of which appear to be with advice of receipt. The regulations regarding this re-registry are far from clear since other covers in her collection have single or double registry also with advice of receipt. One Guatemalan cover with a single registered cachet has additional numeral handstamps indicating the item was registered anew at various transit points. She regards multiple registry as fairly common practice, but agrees they make for uncommon items.

CHINANDEGA CANCELLATIONS: Too late to be included in our last issue, Derek Pocock writes to confirm the prevalence of left side cancellations on postal stationery cards, and right side cancellations on envelopes. However there are two exceptions, one 1907 (others have noted this change of practice around 1900) and one 1884. He is also at a loss to explain this.

Derek is looking for examples of H&G 1, 4, 5 and 6 for the study of printing flaws. Offers of material will be forwarded by your editor.

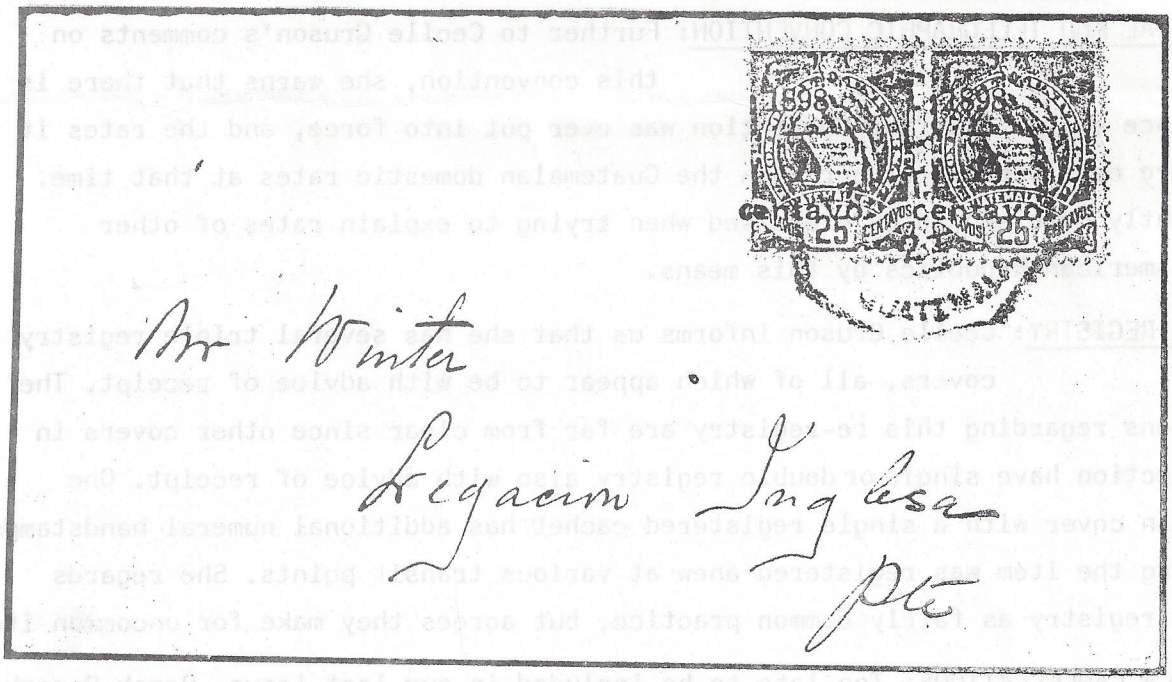
GUATEMALA: THE 1891 PROVISIONAL 1c ON 25c by EL DESCRUBIDOR

According to the Handbook published by the International Society of Guatemala Collectors (ISGC), Volume 1, page 167, the surcharge format, ten wide by five high, was applied twice in sheets of one hundred of this group of surcharged stamps - ISGC numbers 81 to 91 (Scott 75-85, SG 77-87).

A recent discovery, however, poses somewhat of a mystery and as far as is known nothing has ever appeared in past literature.

As of this writing this 'mystery' only concerns the 1c on 25c provisional (ISGC 89, Scott 80, SG 78). The recent acquisition of a locally used envelope with a pair, postmarked April 1, 1898 (now the earliest known date) may throw some additional light on a hitherto unknown method of surcharging a small quantity of these stamps, possibly by way of an experiment.

As can be seen from the illustration the surcharge on both stamps is displaced to the left and the remarkable thing about this is that the 'c' of 'centavo' overlaps the left hand stamp and is partially imprinted on the envelope.



The implications of this discovery point to the fact that (experimentally), a small number of envelopes already provided with pairs of these stamps were thus surcharged directly onto these.

At first sight this makes sense since 2c was the rate for sealed covers sent locally. It is, however, unlikely that many were subjected to this treatment and the experiment must have been abandoned rather quickly. A few such covers apparently found there way into postal use, but how many have survived?

Readers are invited to send their comments or findings or photocopies of any similar covers to the editor, for inclusion in a future issue.

CENTRAL AMERICA STUDY GROUP
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1990

	£	1989 £
INCOME		
Subscriptions		
- Current Year and Arrears	501.37	423.02
Packet Commission	46.22	.00
Seebeck Book Sales	.00	75.50
	547.59	498.52
EXPENDITURE		
Newsletter Expenses 4 Issues (1989 - 4)	471.94	353.71
Packet Costs	6.75	.00
Seebeck Book Costs	.00	.00
Bank Charges	38.18	17.46
	516.87	371.17
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	30.72	127.35
Less Subscriptions received in previous year	(3.00)	(32.00)
Add Subscriptions received in advance for next year	198.02	3.00
CASH SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	225.74	98.35
Cash Surplus as above	225.74	98.35
Balance brought forward	137.71	39.36
Cash In Hand	363.45	137.71

Being cash held to the credit of the Central America Study Group at National Westminster Bank, Caterham, on current account.

I certify this to be a true record of the income and expenditure of the Central America Study Group for the year ended 31 December 1990.

J.G.Walmsley FCA ACMA
Hon Treasurer

15 January 1990